

How can we help?



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Mail Security

USPS policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of customers, employees, and the mail.

🕒 Dec 5, 2019 · FAQ

Article Number

000003591

Customer Information

United States Postal Service® facilities, including the Mail Transport Equipment Service Centers (MTESC), are following established procedures to inspect all mail transport equipment and notify the appropriate agencies as necessary:

- In instances where there is a confirmed exposure, the equipment is decontaminated.
- In instances where the material is unknown but suspect, Postal Service personnel treat the scene as a HAZMAT instance, isolating equipment until a determination is made of the nature of the suspect material.

Where Can I Find Information on Recent Mail Security?

The United States Postal Service® website, [USPS.com®](#), contains up to date information regarding the security of the mail. This information can be accessed through the following areas:

- [Securing the Mail](#): This is the Mail Facility/Service Updates page of the special section on the United States Postal Service® website dedicated to security of the mail. Historical information on issues related to mail security, including closures and impacts resulting from anthrax contamination, can also be found here.
- [Postal Newsroom](#): The latest news about USPS, including news regarding the security of the mail.

What Happens When a Mailing-Related Facility Closes?

When a Processing Plant is forced to close due to suspicious mail, mail is held on site. Postal Service™ personnel will not be allowed into the facility until cleared by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and/or appropriate local health officials. Since each instance is unique in nature, no specific timetable for re-opening the facility can be determined in advance of the actual situation.

Is Mail X-Rayed?

Some of the mail that is sent through the United States Postal Service will pass through an X-Ray machine. There are no specific guidelines as to what may or may not be x-rayed, though mail sent to or through larger cities is likely to pass through an X-Ray machine.

If you have additional questions about X-Raying of items, contact your [local Post Office](#).

Note: Marking a mailpiece "Do Not X-Ray" will not forgo the X-Raying of a mailpiece, and may result in the item being considered suspicious.

Is Mail Ever Irradiated or Sanitized?

The only mail currently being irradiated is mail sent to federal government agencies in Washington, DC, for ZIP Codes™ beginning with **202, 203, 204** and **205**. Mail to these Zones is accumulated at a site near the Brentwood Road facility, and then shipped to New Jersey to be irradiated. This process in New Jersey takes approximately 24 hours. Mail can take three (3) to five (5) days longer to reach its destination than it did prior to irradiation, but is generally not more than three (3) days. Mail returned from New Jersey is aired out for a short period before it is processed at a postal location designated for sorting all Government mail. Once the United States Postal Service® provides mail to Congress and other affected government groups, some have their own mail rooms that do additional security checking before the mail is sorted and actually given to the recipients. Customers may send either Priority Mail® or Priority Mail Express™ items for expedited handling. This mail is not irradiated unless it is sent to the White House.

Mail may arrive in a plastic bag(gie) with a letter explaining the sanitization process (if the mail was sanitized). If not sanitized, the Postal Service™ "re-wraps" mail that has been harmed so that it can reach its destination. We use bags because it helped us ensure the letter would go with the mailpiece. For sanitized mail customers, the Postal Service™ is exploring various methods and hasn't yet made a final decision on whether to bag or not bag sanitized mail before it reaches its destination.

The Postal Service™ process for sanitizing the mail is a three-tier approach:

- Immediate action - Using available off-site facilities to decontaminate.
- Short-term action - Identifying key postal locations for the centralized processing and sanitization of mail.
- Long-term action - Identifying and building into existing processes sanitization equipment that is completely safe for employees and customers.

What are the Effects of Irradiation?

Irradiation can have a negative effect on some plant, food, medical, and electronic devices. But most mail is not currently being irradiated. Only mail to federal government agencies in Washington, DC whose ZIP Code™ ranges begin with 202, 203, 204 and 205 are being irradiated.

While some people have reported mild symptoms after handling irradiated mail, substantial biological and medical testing has found no link between irradiated mail and those symptoms. Because the irradiation process can dry out paper and "yellow" the mail, there may be more paper dust or roughness associated with this mail. The irradiation process does not create any harmful radiation. The process was developed in consultation with scientists and experts both within and outside the federal government, led by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.

Who Do I Call for USPS Law Enforcement?

The United States Postal Service has two law enforcement agencies with distinct areas of investigative of responsibilities to serve the needs of stakeholders, postal employees, and the American public.

Office of Inspector General	Postal Inspection Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theft, delay, or destruction of mail by employees or contractors• Injury compensation fraud• Embezzlements and financial crimes• Contract Fraud• Kickbacks• Computer Crimes• Narcotics• Employee misconduct• Internal affairs and executive investigations• Whistleblower reprisals <p>Contact 888-USPS-OIG (888-877-7644) http://www.uspsoig.gov</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security of employees, facilities, and equipment• Revenue and postage fraud• International mail security• Violent Crimes<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Threats and assaults of employees◦ Burglaries and robberies• Mail theft by non-employees• Dangerous mail bombs• Mail fraud• Identity theft• Narcotics in the mail• Child pornography and obscenity <p>Contact 877-876-2455 https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov</p>

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